

# COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday 18 March 2026  
6:00 pm

Glasshouse, Kerang



GANNAWARRA  
Shire Council

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**MINUTES OF GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT THE GLASSHOUSE, KERANG  
ON WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2026 AT 6:01 PM**

**PRESENT:**

- Cr Garner Smith (Mayor)**
- Cr Ross Stanton (Deputy Mayor)**
- Cr Charlie Gillingham**
- Cr Daniel Bolitho**
- Cr Lisa Farrant**
- Cr Pat Quinn**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Chief Executive Officer**
- Manager People and Culture**
- Governance Officer**

**GALLERY:** Nil

**MEDIA:** Nil

CONFIRMED

## 1 WELCOME TO COUNTRY

The Acknowledgment of Country video was played.

## 2 OPENING DECLARATION

Cr Charlie Gillingham read the Opening Declaration.

## 3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Apology received from Cr Keith Link.

## 4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

### RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Lisa Farrant  
Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton

That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 18 February 2026 be confirmed.

CARRIED

## 5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil

## 6 BRIEFING SESSIONS

### 6.1 RECORD OF COUNCILLOR BRIEFING - 4 FEBRUARY 2026 TO 4 MARCH 2026

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents to Council written records of Councillor Briefings in accordance with Clause 31 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules.

#### RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Daniel Bolitho  
Seconded: Cr Pat Quinn

That Council note the Records of Councillor Briefings from 4 February 2026 to 4 March 2026.

CARRIED

## **7 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION**

### **7.1 NORTH WESTERN VICTORIA ENERGY MINING IMPACT READINESS STRATEGY**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Gannawarra Shire is positioned at the centre of North-Western Victoria's energy and mining transition, with one of the highest concentrations of solar, battery and wind projects in the region, and proximity to significant mineral sands development. These changes will bring major economic opportunities; however, the Strategy identifies that Gannawarra faces some of the most significant readiness pressures of all participating Councils.

Key impacts for Gannawarra include acute housing shortages, limited labour capacity, strain on agricultural productivity, weak telecommunications, and existing infrastructure constraints, particularly around Kerang—identified as one of the towns most exposed to pressures from transmission and renewable energy development. Without early action, these constraints will limit Shire's ability to capture local economic benefit and place pressure on residents, services, and businesses.

This strategy outlines what the likely local impacts, and the priority areas where Council attention will be needed to support community readiness for the transition.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** Cr Daniel Bolitho

**Seconded:** Cr Pat Quinn

**That Council note the Resource Ready North-Western Victoria Energy & Mining Impact & Readiness Strategy and support continued regional advocacy and planning to address the identified readiness challenge.**

**CARRIED**

### **7.2 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING - FEBRUARY**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) met on 3 February 2026. The agenda included reports related to financial, governance, compliance, and risk management matters.

This report provides a summary of the meeting discussions and outcomes which includes the VAGO Audit Strategy to June 2026, the Quarterly Budget Review to 31 December 2025 and Risk Management Framework review. The latter two items Council has received separate reports on.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** Cr Ross Stanton

**Seconded:** Cr Charlie Gillingham

**That Council receive and note the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held 3 February 2026.**

**CARRIED**

### **7.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF BANK GUARANTEES**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council has commenced the process of extending the work authority permit for Coughlan's Pit in May 2024. In December 2025 this application has been approved and one of the final stages is to have in place a current bank guarantee for \$279,000. This report seeks approval for the establishment of this guarantee, along with the reestablishment of bank guarantees for the other current work authorities in place with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** Cr Daniel Bolitho

**Seconded:** Cr Lisa Farrant

**That Council approve:**

- 1. The establishment of a bank guarantee for Work Authority 300 of \$279,000**
- 2. The establishment of a bank guarantee for Work Authority 207 of \$13,000**
- 3. The establishment of a bank guarantee for Work Authority 598 of \$15,000**
- 4. The establishment of a bank guarantee for Work Authority 599 of \$10,000.**

**CARRIED**

## 7.4 PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT - C48GANN

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed amendment will implement the findings of the *Gannawarra Planning Scheme Review* (2024). This review was completed on behalf of the Council and forwarded to the Minister for Planning in April 2025. This review was prepared to satisfy the requirements of Section 12B of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

This report recommends that Council seek authorisation from the Minister to prepare and place on public exhibition an amendment to the Gannawarra Planning Scheme which would implement these findings, along with updates to zoning maps to correct mapping errors and anomalies at 48 sites.

### RESOLUTION

**Moved:** Cr Daniel Bolitho

**Seconded:** Cr Ross Stanton

**That Council:**

1. Seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare an amendment to the Gannawarra Planning Scheme in accordance with Section 16F of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to implement the recommendations and findings of the *Gannawarra Planning Scheme Review* (2024), and also including updates to zoning maps to correct mapping errors and anomalies at 48 sites (Amendment C48gann).
2. Authorise the Manager Planning and Regulatory Services to undertake minor changes to the amendment, including changes requested by the Minister for Planning or the Department of Transport and Planning to receive authorisation, where changes do not affect the purpose or intent of the Amendment.
3. Subject to receiving authorisation from the Minister for Planning, place the amendment on public exhibition in accordance with the requirements of Section 19 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

**CARRIED**

## 7.5 COUNCIL POLICY NO. 73 – DUST CONTROL

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council officers undertake regular reviews of Council policies to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and that they are reflective of current practices. This report addresses the review of Council Policy No. 73 – Dust Control.

### RESOLUTION

**Moved:** Cr Pat Quinn

**Seconded:** Cr Charlie Gillingham

**That Council adopt Policy No. 73 – Dust Control with no changes.**

**CARRIED**

## 7.6 COUNCIL POLICY NO. 85 - ASSET MANAGEMENT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council officers have undertaken a review of Council Policy No. 85 – Asset Management, which establishes Council’s governance framework for the planning, delivery, maintenance, renewal and disposal of Council-owned assets. The policy supports a consistent, whole-of-organisation approach to Asset Management and ensures alignment with Council’s strategic objectives, legislative obligations and current asset management practices.

### RESOLUTION

**Moved:** Cr Ross Stanton

**Seconded:** Cr Lisa Farrant

**That Council adopt Policy No. 85 – Asset Management**

**CARRIED**

## 7.7 FUTURE GOVERNANCE OF COHUNA RECREATION RESERVE

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Officers have been undertaking a review of governance, equity, and operational arrangements across Council-managed recreation reserves. This review highlights inconsistent structures, varying levels of accountability, and differing expectations placed upon user groups.

To enhance governance, improve equity, and support structured implementation of the Cohuna Recreation Reserve Masterplan, this report proposes that Council endorse in principle the development of an Asset Committee for the Cohuna Recreation Reserve; and Commence consultation with affected clubs, user groups, and community stakeholders.

Establishing a single, Council-appointed Asset Committee would provide a clear governance model, enable local decision-making, create a single point of engagement with Council, and support coordinated management of the precinct.

### RESOLUTION

**Moved:** Cr Pat Quinn

**Seconded:** Cr Charlie Gillingham

**That Council:**

- 1. Endorses in principle the establishment of an Asset Committee for the Cohuna Recreation Reserve under section 65 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.**
- 2. Authorise consultation with affected clubs, stakeholders, and community groups regarding the proposed governance model and committee structure.**
- 3. Requests a further report be presented to Council following consultation, detailing the final governance model, committee membership, delegation schedule, and implementation plan.**

**CARRIED**

## 7.8 THRIVING TOGETHER 2026-2030

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The draft *Thriving Together 2026–2030 – a plan for a diverse, inclusive and resilient Gannawarra* document outlines Council’s commitment to strengthening community connection, equity, wellbeing and resilience.

Informed by three community engagement processes reaching more than 1,000 residents, the plan builds on previous social inclusion, disability and resilience work and aligns with the Community Vision 2040 and Council Plan 2025–2029.

Consultation with the community highlighted both the strengths that enable community connection and resilience, such as strong volunteerism and inclusive local programs, as well as key challenges that limit participation such as limited transport, social isolation, accessibility issues, and difficulty accessing timely information.

The plan focuses on five priorities: welcoming and connected communities, improved accessibility, valuing diversity, keeping the community informed, and strengthening emergency preparedness and resilience.

Funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth Government through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) following the 2022 floods, the plan recognises the significant impact of natural disasters on rural communities and the importance of social inclusion and connectedness to supporting community recovery from adverse events.

The draft plan provides clear goals and actions to reduce barriers and build a more inclusive, resilient Gannawarra. Delivered in partnership with residents, organisations and community groups, alongside strengthened cross-sector collaboration, the plan supports opportunities for all residents to participate in community life.

### RESOLUTION

**Moved:** Cr Ross Stanton  
**Seconded:** Cr Daniel Bolitho

**That Council:**

1. Endorse the Draft *Thriving Together 2026-2030 – a plan for a diverse, inclusive and resilient Gannawarra* for community feedback.
2. Invite feedback from the community from Thursday 19 March until Friday 17 April 2026.

**CARRIED**

## 8 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

## 9 NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

## 10 QUESTION TIME

**Name:** Desiree

**Address:** Kerang

**Question 1:**

Could the shire develop a plan for a fully fenced off-leash dog area for the Kerang community? At the moment, many people are using Alexandra Park as an informal off-leash space, and this has recently caused safety issues for local equestrians. The mix of off-leash dogs and horses in the same area is dangerous and creates an unsafe environment for both riders and dog owners. A designated, fenced facility would give the community a safe place to exercise their dogs while preventing further incidents at Alexandra Park.

**Answer:**

The need for a dedicated, fully fenced off-leash dog area in Kerang has been recognised through the recent Kerang Recreation Corridor Masterplan, which identifies a potential dog park site at the end of Wyndham Street.

Further planning and detailed design for this facility have not yet progressed, but it remains a priority concept that will continue to be explored through future budget processes and capital works planning. Council understands the community's desire for a safe and appropriate off-leash space and will keep working toward a solution that provides for dog owners in Kerang.

**Question 2:**

Would the Shire consider creating a local scholarship program that supports residents undertaking essential training - such as nursing, medicine, physiotherapy, and other health or community services - and provides financial assistance during placement? In return, recipients could commit to working in the district for a set number of years, ensuring that the investment directly benefits the community.

**Answer:**

Council and our local health services already play a key role in supporting professional development pathways, including School Based Apprenticeships and other entry level training opportunities that help grow the future health and community services workforce.

While the design and delivery of scholarship or placement support programs sit primarily with health and training providers, Council is committed to supporting these initiatives through strong advocacy, coordinated workforce planning, and partnership efforts that help attract and retain skilled professionals in our district.

We will continue to work closely with our health partners to identify gaps, support sustainable workforce solutions, and champion programs that improve access to training and strengthen local service delivery.

**Name:** Sharen

**Address:** Kerang

**Question:**

Its been brought to my attention that the people of Kerang would like a safe fully enclosed dog park to run and socialise their beloved dogs.

I've lived in other areas and this has brought the community together and socialised their dogs safely. And been a great experience.

I know Kerang is a beautiful community and I would love to see it grow to its full potential.

**Answer:**

The need for a dedicated, fully fenced off-leash dog area in Kerang has been recognised through the recent Kerang Recreation Corridor Masterplan, which identifies a potential dog park site at the end of Wyndham Street.

**Name:** Claire

**Address:** Kerang

**Question:**

Why isn't the registration fee for owning a dog, being used to provide a gated area for them to play off lead?

**Answer:**

Dog registration fees are set under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and are required to support a broad range of animal management services delivered by Council.

These services include animal registration and identification, compliance and enforcement activities, management of nuisance and dangerous animals, operation of the municipal pound, and community education programs to promote responsible pet ownership.

Under legislation, registration fee revenue is not allocated to a single purpose or specific project, such as the construction of a dog park.

However, Council is investigating the possibility of providing a fully enclosed dog park as part of the Kerang Recreation Corridor Masterplan.

## 11 DELEGATES REPORTS

### 11.1 DELEGATES REPORTS

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has memberships with peak Local Government associations, local and regional forums, along with statutory committees. Some memberships require that a Councillor be appointed to act as a delegate to formally represent Council, typically in a voting capacity.

This Agenda item provides an opportunity for Council appointed delegates to present a verbal update on any pertinent matters arising from Council's membership with the following associations.

| COUNCILLOR COMMITTEES 2025/2026                           |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| COMMITTEE   | COUNCILLOR                         |
| Murray River Group of Councillors (MRGC)                  | Cr Garner Smith, Mayor             |
| Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils (LCGC)                  | Cr Garner Smith, Mayor             |
| Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA)              | Cr Daniel Bolitho                  |
| Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC)      | Cr Lisa Farrant                    |
| Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) | Cr Keith Link                      |
| Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)                   | Cr Ross Stanton                    |
| Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) (x2)                       | Cr Garner Smith<br>Cr Ross Stanton |
| Transport Connections                                     | Cr Pat Quinn                       |
| Rural Councils Victoria (RCV)                             | Cr Charlie Gillingham              |
| Timber Towns Victoria (TTV)                               | Cr Pat Quinn                       |
| Community Halls Community Asset Committee                 | Cr Keith Link                      |
| Community Resilience Committee                            | Cr Keith Link                      |

## 12 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Nil

**The Meeting Closed at 7:06pm.**

**The Minutes of this Meeting were confirmed at the Meeting of the Gannawarra Shire Council held on 15 April 2026.**

**Mayor Garner Smith  
CHAIR**

CONFIRMED